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Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions

Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa**

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/152. It provides an update of information contained in the report of the Secretary-General submitted to the Assembly at its seventy-second session (A/72/354) and covers the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018. The report has been coordinated by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and includes information provided by the International Labour Organization, the International Organization for Migration, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, the United Nations Population Fund, the World Food Programme and the World Health Organization. It also includes information drawn from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre.

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** The submission of the present report was delayed owing to the need for input from the Secretariat.

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I. Introduction

1. Africa[1] continues to host large numbers of refugees, internally displaced persons, stateless persons and others affected by conflict, persecution and generalized violence, and numerous emergencies afflict the continent. The crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was of particular concern, with localized unrest triggering the internal displacement of 2.16 million people, bringing the total number of internally displaced persons in the country to 4.5 million and sending tens of thousands more across borders. The conflict in South Sudan continued to deteriorate and, by the end of 2017, had displaced more than one third of the citizens of South Sudan. In the Central African Republic, violent clashes among armed groups and intercommunal tensions increased sharply, and conflict spread to parts of the country that had previously been unaffected. While some countries were plagued by new emergencies, others endured protracted crises and displacement situations.

2. By the end of 2017, the number of persons of concern to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)[2] in Africa reached 24.2 million, up from 19.6 million in 2016. That included 6.3 million refugees, up from 5.1 million, and 14.5 million internally displaced persons, up from 11.1 million. The region also hosted 509,000 asylum seekers and 712,000 stateless persons.[3] The majority of the refugees came from South Sudan (2.4 million), Somalia (986,400), the Sudan (694,000), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (620,800), the Central African Republic (545,500), Eritrea (486,200) and Burundi (439,300). Uganda was the largest host country on the continent, providing protection and assistance to 1.4 million refugees, an increase of 44 per cent compared with 2016. The Sudan and Ethiopia were the second- and the third-largest host countries, with 906,600 and 889,400 refugees, respectively.

3. Compounding these complex emergencies were an array of protection challenges, including trafficking and forced recruitment. Sexual and gender-based violence, which affects women and girls disproportionately, remained prevalent, exposing them to risks and vulnerabilities, which are exacerbated by displacement. Meanwhile, drought, insecurity, conflict and a lack of access led to food insecurity for both refugees and host communities and brought some areas to the brink of famine while also testing the ability of humanitarian organizations to respond to emergencies and deliver assistance.

4. Mixed movements of refugees and migrants from East Africa and the Horn of Africa, and from West Africa, through the central Mediterranean route towards Europe, as well as from the Great Lakes region towards South Africa, continued to affect the region. Promoting a favourable protection environment for people on the move, including advocating access to territory and fair asylum procedures, required considerable effort.

5. Despite the increasing number of displaced persons, solutions were found, including for refugees who received support in returning voluntarily to Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Rwanda, Somalia and the Sudan. Opportunities for local integration and resettlement were limited, however.

6. The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (General Assembly resolution 71/1), together with the comprehensive refugee response framework

[1] In the present report, "Africa" refers to sub-Saharan Africa only.

[2] According to UNHCR, persons of concern includes refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons protected or assisted by UNHCR, returnees, stateless persons and others in a refugee-like situation.

[3] Statistics not available for all countries; actual number estimated to be higher.

contained therein and the process for developing a global compact on refugees that was subsequently launched, generated new impetus for finding solutions to displacement in Africa and strengthening support for the host countries and communities that provide protection and assistance to refugees, some for decades. As at June 2018, the comprehensive refugee response framework was being applied in eight countries in sub-Saharan Africa: Chad, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Uganda and Zambia. Building on their national responses, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Uganda were also applying the comprehensive refugee response framework in the regional context through the Nairobi Declaration on Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees and the Reintegration of Returnees in Somalia, supported by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). During the reporting period, African States were actively engaged in the process leading to the proposal of a global compact on refugees,[4] whose authors committed themselves to a more equitable sharing of the burden and responsibility for hosting and supporting the world's refugees.

II. Subregional overviews

A. Central Africa and the Great Lakes

7. In Central Africa and the Great Lakes region, the number of refugees increased from 1.35 million to 1.44 million, while the number of internally displaced persons rose sharply, from 3 million to 5.4 million. The conflicts in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo were the main sources of new internal displacement.

8. The situation in the Central African Republic deteriorated as a result of widespread violence and clashes between rival armed groups, as well as an increase in reprisals targeting the civilian population. That drove displacement to its highest level since the start of the conflict, in 2013. By the end of June 2018, the number of internally displaced persons reached more than 608,000. Some 572,000 refugees were hosted in neighbouring countries, including Cameroon (260,000), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (176,000), Chad (99,000) and the Congo (31,700). Moreover, nearly half of the population faced food insecurity and some 2.5 million persons were in need of humanitarian assistance.

9. The Democratic Republic of the Congo was severely affected by new waves of displacement in the east, including Tanganyika and South Kivu provinces, while intercommunal conflict in the Kasai region resulted in internal displacement and movements across the border towards Angola. The total number of refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo increased by 16 per cent, from 537,000 to 781,700. The majority received protection in Uganda (288,800), the United Republic of Tanzania (84,500), Rwanda (82,400), Burundi (71,300), Zambia (41,400) and Angola (35,800). The Democratic Republic of the Congo also continued to host nearly 536,000 refugees, mainly from Rwanda (218,000), the Central African Republic (176,300) and South Sudan (93,100).

10. The refugee crisis in Burundi entered its fourth year, and refugees continued to arrive in neighbouring countries, although fewer than in previous years. As of May 2018, more than 178,000 persons were internally displaced and some 395,000 refugees from Burundi were in the region. Following a tripartite meeting with UNHCR and the Governments of Burundi and the United Republic of Tanzania in

[4] Namely, the thematic discussions and stocktaking in the second half of 2017 and the six formal consultations in the first half of 2018.

March 2018, stakeholders agreed to work towards the voluntary repatriation of refugees from Burundi when conditions allowed.

B. East Africa, including the Horn of Africa

11. Continuing violence in Somalia and South Sudan, in addition to drought, food insecurity and other factors, left 7.2 million people internally displaced in the subregion and brought the number of refugees to more than 4.3 million. This marked a substantial increase compared with 2016, during which there had been 5.8 million internally displaced persons and 3.3 million refugees.

12. Somalia remained one of the most protracted displacement situations in the world, with more than 835,000 refugees hosted in the subregion and Yemen. It also had some 2.1 million internally displaced persons, an increase of some 570,000, owing to natural hazards and ongoing fighting. The largest numbers of refugees were in Yemen (256,000), Kenya (255,000), Ethiopia (256,000), Uganda (37,000) and Djibouti (12,100). Some 41,000 people returned voluntarily in 2017, mainly from Kenya; the majority returned to Kismaayo and Mogadishu.

13. Following renewed violence that broke out in South Sudan in July 2016, the humanitarian and displacement situation continued to deteriorate, and a cessation of hostilities agreed upon in December 2017 was short-lived. Compounded by a general state of lawlessness and food shortages, the situation led to large population movements across borders. The number of refugees increased by 1 million, reaching more than 2.5 million by the end of 2017. The majority were hosted in Uganda (1 million), the Sudan (768,100), Ethiopia (421,400), Kenya (111,500) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (89,000). The number of internally displaced persons currently stands at approximately 1.9 million, more than 210,000 of whom shelter in United Nations protection-of-civilians sites. Protection risks, including the forced recruitment of children by armed groups and sexual and gender-based violence, remain high.

14. In the Sudan, there are currently some 2 million internally displaced persons, of whom 1.76 million were displaced by the conflict in Darfur and the rest displaced by conflict in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile State, where a lack of access has remained a challenge. The majority of the refugees from the Sudan are hosted in Chad (324,000), South Sudan (262,000) and Ethiopia (43,900).

C. Southern Africa

15. By the end of 2017, the subregion of Southern Africa hosted approximately 282,000 asylum seekers, 197,700 refugees, mainly from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and Somalia, and 15,100 internally displaced persons. With respect to protection concerns, the erroneous application of the country-of-first-asylum concept, the detention of asylum seekers and refoulement were reported in several countries. Xenophobia also remained a problem.

16. Humanitarian agencies continued to respond to the needs of refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in particular those in Angola and Zambia. In Zambia, the local government was supported by United Nations agencies and development partners in formulating a district development strategy and plan, which will inform the national development plan. In Mozambique, UNHCR, the World Food Programme (WFP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme are implementing a

multi-year livelihoods project in the Maratane refugee camp aimed at increasing self-reliance and fostering local integration.

17. Malawi and Zambia are also pursuing efforts to allow refugees to live outside of camps. In Malawi, following a presidential decree on the relocation of the Dzaleka refugee camp, UNHCR and the Government began to develop a settlement approach in the Northern Region. In June 2018, the Government of Zambia announced its decision to relocate to a settlement its remaining refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who were then being housed at a temporary transit centre.

D. West Africa

18. The situation in the subregion, in particular in the countries surrounding the Lake Chad Basin, was characterized by multiple armed conflicts, violent extremism and human rights violations, as well as growing poverty, severe food and water shortages and drought. This triggered significant population movements towards Northern Africa and within and across borders in large swathes of West Africa.

19. Five years into the crisis in Nigeria, the displacement situation remained grave, with ongoing hostilities in the north. By June 2018, there were some 286,900 refugees in Cameroon, Chad and the Niger, as well as more than 1.7 million internally displaced persons in north-eastern Nigeria. Freedom of movement and access to livelihood activities for internally displaced persons remained limited owing to security threats and military control. Clashes between herders and farmers in Benue State reportedly resulted in the displacement of 130,000 individuals, who sought refuge in government-run camps. Despite this, some 283,000 Nigerian refugees have returned from Cameroon, Chad and the Niger in recent years. UNHCR raised the concern that the voluntariness and sustainability of return for those coming from Cameroon was not assured. The situation also affected the Niger, in particular in the Diffa region, creating a security and protection crisis that affected more than 252,000 people, among them Nigerian refugees. In Cameroon, population movements remained dynamic in the Far North region owing to the activities of cross-border insurgents, and maintaining asylum space and respect for the principle of non-refoulement was of particular concern. In the second half of 2017, Nigeria began to receive large numbers of anglophone Cameroonians, which exacerbated the already complex humanitarian situation in the country.

20. In Mali, the volatile situation in the northern and central parts of the country, as well as insecurity in the border areas, led to continued displacement. As of June 2018, there were some 51,800 internally displaced persons in the country and more than 130,000 refugees in Burkina Faso, Mauritania and the Niger. Approximately 19,500 internally displaced persons were newly displaced and 4,600 were displaced for a second or third time, while some 1,200 refugees were newly arrived in the Tillabéri region of the Niger from Mali. Some 589,600 people returned home during the reporting period, including 526,500 internally displaced persons and 63,100 refugees.

III. Protection of refugees, internally displaced persons and stateless persons

A. Protection of refugees

21. Solidarity remained steadfast, with many countries continuing to maintain open borders and welcoming large numbers of refugees and asylum seekers. Nevertheless, instances of refoulement threatened the protection of refugees, and freedom of

movement was sometimes limited. Maintaining the civilian and humanitarian character of asylum also remained a challenge.

22. The capacity of national asylum systems to absorb new arrivals was stretched. In some countries, refugees were prevented from gaining access to asylum procedures or faced long waiting periods in order to have their status determined. In collaboration with relevant Governments, UNHCR provided support for capacity development, technical assistance and legal and policy advice to strengthen and support asylum systems in order to keep them accessible and fair to those seeking international protection. While several countries in Africa have begun to issue machine-readable travel documents to refugees, many refugees on the continent have no access to travel documents at all.

23. Registration and documentation play an important role in securing protection and solutions, including by ensuring access to vital services. The UNHCR biometric identification management system is currently being employed in 30 operations in Africa. During the reporting period, the system was deployed in Botswana, Nigeria and the Sudan.

24. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UNHCR continued to support Governments in providing access to birth registration in refugee settlements in various countries, including Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. In Ethiopia and Uganda, legislative and policy frameworks have been amended to allow birth registration for refugees, which is a critical step in ensuring their legal recognition, reducing the risks of statelessness and facilitating their access to national services, including health care and education.

B. Mixed movements, trafficking and smuggling

25. The vast majority of asylum seekers and refugees remain in countries neighbouring their own. Those who move on travel alongside and use the same routes as migrants, generally remaining on the continent. Nevertheless, the movement of refugees and migrants across the Sahara towards North Africa, in particular Libya, and to the central Mediterranean Sea towards Europe continued, with an estimated 45,000 people arriving on the shores of Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Spain between January and June 2018. Other movements took place from Central Africa and the Great Lakes to Southern Africa, and from the Horn of Africa across the Red Sea, including an estimated 100,000 new arrivals in Yemen.

26. Migrants and refugees travelling along migratory routes in Africa continued to be subject to violence, abuse and exploitation, including trafficking by smugglers and criminal networks. On the basis of 11,000 interviews conducted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNICEF in 2017, it has been determined that 8 out of 10 children and young people travelling along the central Mediterranean route face protection challenges, such as exploitation and being held against their will. The African Union, the European Union and the United Nations established a joint task force in November 2017 to address the migrant situation in Libya. IOM assisted with the voluntary return of migrants, including unaccompanied children.

27. Nearly 55,000 refugees and asylum seekers registered with UNHCR in Libya, including more than 10,000 in 2018, the majority of whom risked detention and arbitrary arrest. Some 8,000 are being detained and 4,500 are of concern to UNHCR. Conditions in detention centres have deteriorated as a result of increased overcrowding and a lack of basic living standards, which have been compounded by the limited prospects for solutions to their situation. Riots and hunger strikes have occurred inside detention centres. A number of serious security incidents have placed United Nations staff at physical risk. Since November 2017, 1,858 refugees have been

evacuated from Libya: 1,536 to the Niger, 312 to Italy and 10 to Romania. The Libyan Coast Guard has rescued or intercepted 12,910 refugees and migrants (8,860 men, 1,978 women and 1,216 children) at sea during 93 operations. The main nationalities of those who disembarked were Nigerian (1,696), Eritrean (1,409) and Sudanese (983). Since the beginning of 2018, 97 bodies have been recovered from Libyan waters and 583 lives have been lost at sea.

28. In response to the imprisonment of thousands of people in poor and insecure conditions in detention facilities in Libya, an evacuation transit mechanism was established in the Niger in late 2017. The mechanism provides access to protection and solutions for vulnerable asylum seekers and refugees evacuated from Libya. With the support of the Government of the Niger and the European Commission, the mechanism has already succeeded in evacuating more than 1,500 people, including unaccompanied children.

C. Protection of internally displaced persons

29. Given the 14.5 million internally displaced persons in Africa, the promotion of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa for further ratification remained vital. Thus far, it has been signed by 40 of the 54 States members of the African Union and ratified by 27. While no African State has formally adopted a law or policy based on the Convention since its entry into force in 2012, a number of countries have drafted legislation or policies that are awaiting adoption.

30. The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement provide a framework for preventing, addressing and resolving internal displacement on the continent. In April 2018, the twentieth anniversary of the Guiding Principles, a three-year multi-stakeholder plan of action was launched in order to prevent internal displacement and advance protection and solutions for internally displaced persons. Driven by the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, UNHCR and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the plan of action was developed in consultation with States, IOM, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other United Nations agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and experts. The thematic priorities of the plan of action have been developed for the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, the Niger, Somalia and South Sudan.

31. In March 2018, the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons called for a protection strategy in the Niger to address some of the challenges there, making recommendations to support the thematic priorities of the multi-stakeholder plan of action.

D. Sexual and gender-based violence: prevention and response

32. While it has been confirmed that incidents of sexual and gender-based violence have occurred in numerous conflict situations, agencies believe that such incidents are underreported. Sexual violence is employed as a tactic of war, and the accountability of perpetrators remains limited. In South Sudan, IOM interviewed more than 2,500 internally displaced persons in protection-of-civilians sites; nearly half of them reported that a woman or girl in their household had experienced some form of sexual and gender-based violence. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, sexual violence perpetrated by parties to the conflict increased demonstrably in 2017.

33. Humanitarian agencies prioritized sexual and gender-based violence prevention and response through community engagement, increased access to essential health services and the provision of mental health and psychosocial support and legal aid. In Nigeria, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) built and managed seven new "empowerment spaces" for displaced women, focusing on the prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence. More than 110,000 people were attended to, and some 16,000 received support for livelihood activities. The deployment by UNHCR of experts on sexual and gender-based violence at the onset of emergencies also helped to mitigate the risk of such violence and improved access to vital services for survivors. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights provided legal aid and support to survivors of conflict-related sexual violence.

E. Protection of children

34. Conflicts throughout the region exacerbated the protection situation for refugee and internally displaced children. The risks included physical and psychological harm, forced recruitment, sexual and gender-based violence, child labour, abduction and trafficking. In Nigeria, children, mainly girls under the age of 15 years, were used increasingly by militants to carry out bomb attacks in the north-east. UNICEF continues to work to secure the release of children associated with armed groups. In South Sudan, various armed groups handed over some 800 children to UNICEF in 2018. Family tracing and the reunification of unaccompanied and separated children with their families remained a priority.

35. In the Horn of Africa alone, some 8.7 million children are at risk of malnutrition, face water shortages, lack access to health care and have had their education disrupted. To contribute to a safe environment, UNICEF and its partners have strengthened child protection systems, provided psychosocial support, trained caregivers and established child-friendly spaces that have facilitated structured recreational activities. During the reporting period, more than 384,000 refugee children benefited from these services in the Eastern and Southern Africa subregions.

F. Statelessness

36. Key international and regional commitments to eliminating statelessness in Africa were reaffirmed and pursued during the reporting period. The implementation of the Banjul Plan of Action of the Economic Community of West African States on the Eradication of Statelessness 2017–2024 continued, including the adoption by Burkina Faso and Mali of national action plans to eradicate statelessness. Burkina Faso also acceded to the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness of 1961.

37. At two meetings, held in South Africa and Côte d'Ivoire, experts reviewed and finalized the African Union draft protocol on nationality and statelessness, which will be submitted later in 2018 to the special technical committees of the Union on migration, refugees and internally displaced persons and on justice and legal affairs, before its adoption by member States.

38. Building on the UNHCR 10-year campaign to end statelessness, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the 12 States members of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region signed the Declaration on the Eradication of Statelessness in October 2017, committing to ratifying the international conventions on statelessness, undertaking legal reform by adapting national laws and policies, strengthening civil status systems and developing national action plans.

39. In Madagascar, as a result of recent changes in the nationality law, more than 1,360 nationality certificates were issued to children born to Malagasy mothers and foreign fathers. Training was provided to Governments on preventing and reducing statelessness, including in Eswatini, Namibia and South Africa.

IV. Humanitarian response and operational challenges

A. Capacity and constraints

40. Insecurity hampered relief efforts in Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia and South Sudan. The use of improvised explosive devices caused civilian casualties. In Nigeria, humanitarian access was impeded by ongoing hostilities, which left 930,000 people with limited assistance from the international community.

41. Bureaucratic impediments, poor infrastructure, the limited presence of partners and funding constraints undermined the delivery of protection and assistance. In several countries, humanitarian organizations faced barriers to importing lifesaving drugs and other humanitarian goods, while delays in registering NGO partners also affected the humanitarian response.

42. Allegations of fraud, the misappropriation of funds, misconduct and exploitation surfaced in several refugee operations in Africa, leading to investigations and remedial actions by agencies and the countries involved. Measures to enhance accountability and transparency were taken in response.

43. Humanitarian agencies responded to one system-wide level 3 emergency, declared by the Inter-agency Standing Committee in October 2017 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Although the emergency was deactivated in April 2018, the situation remains critical, as recently described by the Human Rights Council.[5] Inter-agency contingency planning was undertaken in more than 20 country operations.

B. Food and nutrition

44. Food insecurity and severe malnutrition affected many countries in the region, with reductions in food rations due to funding shortfalls in Cameroon, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Rwanda, South Sudan, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. Approximately 3.3 million refugees received less than the standard amount of food assistance. Serious protection concerns emerged, including the use of negative coping strategies, such as child labour and survival sex, to meet basic needs.

45. In South Sudan, thanks to improved access and a massive humanitarian response, a large-scale famine was averted in 2017. The situation remained dire and was marked by extreme levels of food insecurity. Prolonged conflict in north-eastern Nigeria has undermined food security, in particular in areas that are inaccessible to humanitarian organizations. In Somalia, widespread food insecurity was caused by poor agricultural production, persistent drought and livestock losses.

46. To respond to food insecurity and malnutrition, humanitarian agencies scaled up lifesaving interventions. UNICEF, WFP and their partners supported the treatment of children suffering from severe acute malnutrition. Children were provided with

[5] See www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23263&LangID=E.

vitamin supplements and fortified foods, while mothers and caregivers were counselled and provided with safe spaces in which to feed their children.

C. Cash assistance and financial inclusion

47. UNHCR and WFP scaled up the use of cash assistance to address food insecurity, enhance protection and promote the well-being of refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees. Cash-based interventions are ongoing, with some of the largest programmes carried out in the Central African Republic, Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda and Somalia. Between July 2017 and June 2018, UNHCR disbursed some $53.9 million in cash in Africa to respond to a variety of needs. Of that total, $28.2 million was provided through partners. WFP assisted more than 2.9 million people[6] between June and December 2017 and 4.7 million between January and June 2018 through cash-based transfers.

48. Significant investments were made in the strategic use of cash-based interventions to promote the financial inclusion of refugees and others of concern by facilitating their access to bank and mobile money accounts in Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, the Niger, Rwanda, Somalia and Zambia. To strengthen existing infrastructure and the provision of financial services in displacement-affected areas, UNHCR launched a call for financial service providers in 16 countries in Africa.

D. Public health

49. The health of refugees and internally displaced persons was affected by severe malnutrition and outbreaks of disease during the reporting period. UNHCR, working with Governments and their partners, successfully contributed to the management of multiple outbreaks, including cholera and acute watery diarrhoea (in Kenya, the Sudan and Uganda), measles (in Angola), typhoid (in Rwanda) and monkey pox (in the Congo). The World Health Organization (WHO) strengthened both preventive and curative services for meningitis, cholera, malaria, yellow fever, measles and Ebola in the Lake Chad region. Acute diarrhoea and cholera remained the primary concern in the Horn of Africa, with nearly 120,000 cases reported in the region in 2017. The majority of the cholera cases were in Somalia (more than 78,000, representing a 550 per cent increase compared with 2016).

50. Preventive measures were instrumental in reducing the incidence of disease, including tuberculosis and HIV and AIDS. Comprehensive services for the prevention, testing and treatment of HIV were reinforced in Cameroon, the Niger, Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. United Nations agencies worked to ensure access to health care and advocate the inclusion of refugees in national health systems. Efforts were also made to strengthen mental health support for refugees, including through the training of primary health-care workers in the Congo, South Sudan and Uganda. UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO and their partners continued to carry out water, sanitation and hygiene programmes, with the aim of improving health conditions for millions of people. In 2017, UNHCR reached nearly 4.2 million people in 30 African countries with water and sanitation services.

[6] Including refugees, returnees, internally displaced persons and residents in the region.

E. Education

51. Access to education continued to improve, including through the progressive inclusion of refugees in national education systems. Significant progress was made in Ethiopia on behalf of refugee children at all levels of education, consistent with the Government's pledges. In Djibouti, refugees have begun to use the national education curriculum, while the Government of Chad has included 108 schools serving refugee camps and sites in the national education system. The Government of Uganda, with support from UNICEF and UNHCR, developed a three-year response plan (for the period 2018–2021) for the full inclusion of refugee children in the national education system, which is expected to benefit 675,000 children.

52. UNHCR and the Global Partnership for Education expanded efforts to include refugees in national multi-year education plans, including in Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Liberia, Mali, South Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania. In 2017, the Government of Chad elected to apply accelerated funds from the Partnership to the education-related needs of refugees and returnees in the Lake Chad Basin region.

53. UNICEF and its partners provided access to quality education to more than 327,000 refugee children and adolescents in Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania. With the help of the Vodafone Foundation, information technology brought digital learning to refugee camps in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, South Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania. Connected learning, combining digital platforms with traditional classroom teaching, provided higher education for refugees in Chad, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda and the Sudan. In December 2017, IGAD member States adopted the Djibouti Declaration and Action Plan on Refugee Education, in which they committed themselves to the inclusion of refugees in national education plans by 2020. Additional IGAD commitments included the establishment of regional education quality standards and regional skills development for refugees, as well as accreditation and certification of education programmes. The Nairobi Declaration and Call for Action on Education, issued in April 2018, included additional commitments to making education systems more inclusive of refugees, in line with Agenda 2063 of the African Union and the Sustainable Development Goals.

54. Access to education remained restricted in some countries owing to conflict and other barriers, such as the collapse of national systems, the destruction of facilities and the loss of teachers, the lack of identity documents and tuition fees. Some 8.7 million refugee and internally displaced children require access to education.

F. Shelter and livelihoods

55. The shelter-related needs of refugees and internally displaced persons in Africa continue to grow, mostly as a result of new displacement; 1 million refugees and more than 9 million internally displaced persons have been identified by the United Nations and its partners as being in urgent need of shelter-related assistance. With nearly 60 per cent of refugees in Africa living in urban areas, a shift in response strategies is needed to address the problems of urban poverty and vulnerability. In the context of internal displacement, the Global Shelter Cluster supports such responses, coordinating 269 partners and more than $130 million in funding.

56. Providing access to the labour market and promoting economic inclusion benefit both refugees, by helping to foster self-reliance, and host communities. For displaced women and girls in particular, humanitarian efforts addressing resilience and self-reliance provide empowerment and enable the active engagement and leadership of

women in helping to bridge the humanitarian-development divide. In 2017, UNDP and UNHCR strengthened their collaboration on livelihood programming, including cash for work, vocational training and the development of small and medium-sized enterprises in a number of countries. In the Sudan, support was provided to more than 958,400 people, including internally displaced persons, returnees and host community members, in the areas of agriculture, small business and entrepreneurial skills training.

57. In line with the New York Declaration, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNHCR are working to improve access to the labour market and promote inclusive economic development. In Ethiopia, ILO launched an initiative in April 2018 to support the operationalization of the Ethiopia Economic Opportunities Programme and the national application of the comprehensive refugee response framework in order to facilitate livelihood opportunities and access to the labour market. WFP contributed to the application of the framework in Uganda by strengthening livelihoods for refugees and host communities through an agriculture and market support programme.

58. UNHCR continued to promote the "graduation approach" in Burkina Faso, Mozambique, the Sudan, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, targeting refugees and host community members living in extreme poverty. It also launched a market access, design and empowerment initiative that connects refugee artisans with markets in Burkina Faso, Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania.

59. The private sector assisted in addressing displacement, including through livelihood programming. An IKEA Foundation-supported project in the Dollo Ado refugee camp in Ethiopia helped refugees to move from assistance to self-reliance, diversifying livelihood opportunities for them and their host community.

G. Security of humanitarian workers

60. The delivery of humanitarian assistance continued to be impeded by violence and volatility. In 2017, there were 145 incidents affecting humanitarian workers from the United Nations and its partners. A total of 60 national staff members and 6 international staff members were killed. Kidnappings affected 36 national staff members and 7 international staff members.

61. The Central African Republic, Nigeria, Somalia and South Sudan had the highest incidences of deaths and injuries among humanitarian workers. In South Sudan, 107 aid workers have been killed since the conflict began in December 2013, including 30 in 2017 and 9 in the first six months of 2018.

V. Ending forced displacement

62. Resolving the problem of displacement requires a combination of solutions, including, for refugees, the three traditional durable solutions of voluntary repatriation, resettlement and local integration, as well as complementary pathways for admission to third countries. For internally displaced persons, solutions include return, local integration and settlement elsewhere in the country. Although failure to address the root causes of conflict in Africa resulted in limited progress towards solutions, there were several important developments in that regard.

63. In line with the commitments made in the Nairobi Declaration on Durable Solutions, IGAD member States adopted the Road Map and Results Framework of the Nairobi Action Plan to support efforts to deliver durable solutions. They set out a comprehensive regional approach aimed at creating an environment conducive to voluntary and sustainable return; furthering durable solutions by maintaining

protection space and promoting the self-reliance and inclusion of refugees in countries of asylum; and strengthening subregional and international cooperation.

A. Voluntary return

64. Voluntary repatriation, based on an informed decision, is the preferred solution for many refugees. In 2017, UNHCR supported the voluntary repatriation of refugees to Somalia (41,000), Rwanda (18,000), Burundi (13,000) and Côte d'Ivoire (8,300), with smaller numbers returning to Mali and the Sudan. Some 282,800 Nigerians and 78,600 refugees from the Central African Republic also returned spontaneously, despite fragile conditions in these countries. In Ethiopia, more than 55,000 of the conflict-affected internally displaced persons in the Oromia region have either returned or settled elsewhere in the country.

65. The application of the comprehensive refugee response framework for the Somali refugee situation helped create conditions conducive to voluntary return, including measures to strengthen security, build government capacity and support the country's national development plan. The Government of Somalia organized a national forum on durable solutions for refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons, while work on the durable solutions initiative continued. With support from the Peacebuilding Fund, a Kenya-Somalia cross-border project was undertaken to improve the reintegration of returnees into Somalia. In addition, post-return monitoring was launched in October 2017 to profile refugees returning from Somalia and to better understand their needs.

66. The Tripartite Commission for the Voluntary Repatriation of Burundian Refugees, involving the Governments of Burundi and the United Republic of Tanzania, together with UNHCR, continued to work to facilitate voluntary returns. More than 20,000 refugees have registered to return to Burundi in a programme that targets 72,000 persons. Meanwhile, a joint programme carried out by UNHCR, UNDP, UNFPA and FAO promotes conditions for sustainable return, focusing on access to justice and social services, the rule of law, improved security, livelihood opportunities and housing, land and property rights.

67. To support sustainability, humanitarian agencies collaborated with development and peacebuilding partners. Internally displaced persons in the Central African Republic and Central African refugees in neighbouring countries were included in the national perception survey on justice, security and peace that will inform State-building efforts. UNHCR and its partners are enhancing the access of returnees to housing, land and property. In the Sudan, a joint United Nations programme is strengthening the justice and security sectors, including through dispute resolution mechanisms, and the re-establishment of the criminal justice system in pilot areas of return for the internally displaced.

B. Local integration

68. Several countries enabled the local integration of refugees, including by providing durable legal status and naturalization, as envisaged in article 34 of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. Guinea-Bissau granted citizenship to Senegalese refugees living in a protracted situation, and Zambia implemented the decision to provide long-term residency to former Rwandan refugees. In the context of the Nairobi Declaration, Ethiopia and Kenya pledged to integrate certain groups of refugees.

C. Resettlement

69. Resettlement continues to serve as a protection tool to meet the needs of some of the most vulnerable refugees. After a steady increase in resettlement submissions from Africa between 2012 and 2016, the trend was reversed in 2017, with just over 21,500 refugees submitted for resettlement, owing to a drop in available places — a 51 per cent decrease compared with 2016. Departures for resettlement countries also declined, from 38,900 in 2016 to 15,800 in 2017. Some 60 per cent of all submissions from the region involved refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, followed by Eritrea, Somalia and the Sudan.

70. The Core Group for Enhanced Resettlement and Complementary Pathways along the Central Mediterranean Route was established in August 2017. Comprising resettlement States, the European Union, IOM and UNHCR, the Group seeks to mobilize support for resettlement of the most vulnerable refugees and reduce dangerous onward movements across the Mediterranean. The 15 priority countries of asylum, which extend to the Middle East and North Africa region, are Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, the Niger, the Sudan and Tunisia. The response has been modest; of the 40,000 resettlement places requested by UNHCR in September 2017, some 25,000 have been pledged.

D. Complementary pathways

71. Complementary pathways for admission can provide additional opportunities for achieving long-lasting solutions for refugees. By learning new skills, contributing to the labour market, acquiring an education or reuniting with family members in a third country, refugees can enjoy a safe and lawful stay in a place where their international protection needs are met. While refugees face many barriers and challenges in accessing complementary pathways — for example, obtaining exit permits, entry visas or travel documents or meeting strict eligibility criteria — significant progress was made in Africa in 2017. At the regional level, the adoption of the African Union Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment will facilitate complementary pathways.

VI. Partnerships and coordination

A. Inter-agency cooperation

72. The UNHCR refugee coordination model guides that Office's coordination of operational planning and resource mobilization in refugee situations. As part of the overall humanitarian response, regional refugee coordinators for the refugee situations in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria and South Sudan developed regional refugee response plans, which provided a common platform for planning, delivery and fundraising for partners in the refugee response. The regional refugee response plans articulate the coordinated strategy of some 180 partners across 15 countries to respond to the main refugee crises in Africa. Under the umbrella of the Inter-agency Standing Committee, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs coordinated the development of inter-agency humanitarian response plans, including response for internally displaced persons. In 2017, however, only 28.6 per cent of the humanitarian appeals and strategies in sub-Saharan Africa

included a gender analysis.[7] To address the needs of people displaced by conflict, it is recommended that sex- and age-disaggregated data be collected and used at every stage of the humanitarian programme cycle.

73. The coordination of the inter-agency response to internally displaced persons is the responsibility of the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the Inter-agency Standing Committee system, with the protection cluster ensuring that protection is central to the humanitarian response. In 2017, the global protection cluster contributed to the response in Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Mali, the Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and the Sudan. Camp coordination and camp management clusters, co-led by UNHCR and IOM, supported the response in the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Niger, Nigeria, Somalia and South Sudan. The global camp coordination and camp management cluster focused on building the coordination and management capacity of local responders through continent-wide training in Morocco and Senegal.

B. Partnerships with non-governmental organizations

74. The majority of the United Nations programmes were implemented in close cooperation with local, national and international NGOs across some 48 country operations in sub-Saharan Africa. Partnerships with NGOs were crucial to the implementation of lifesaving programmes, the delivery of assistance, the realization of protection and solutions, and advocacy efforts.

75. NGOs also played an important role in the implementation of the comprehensive refugee response framework and the development of the global compact on refugees, as part of a whole-of-society approach. National and international NGOs participate in comprehensive refugee response framework facilitation mechanisms led by Governments, leveraging their technical expertise, local knowledge and contacts with the affected communities. In Uganda, for example, NGOs seconded a policy analyst to the comprehensive refugee response framework secretariat in the Office of the Prime Minister. The Regional Durable Solutions secretariat, a coalition of 12 NGOs, has contributed to the implementation of the comprehensive refugee response framework in East Africa, including the Horn of Africa.

C. Development cooperation

76. Progress was made in addressing forced displacement through development planning and cooperation. Cooperation with the World Bank Group was strengthened through an increasing number of joint activities at the field level, including where its International Development Association 18 subwindow for refugees and host communities had been launched. To support this endeavour, a series of World Bank-UNHCR missions explored innovative ways to join humanitarian and country-level development systems in the delivery of sustainable benefits for both communities. Financing was approved for Cameroon ($274 million towards access to health care, education, social safety nets and social and economic infrastructure), Ethiopia ($202 million towards economic opportunities for refugees and host communities) and Uganda ($360 million for infrastructure and $335 million for water management to improve service delivery).

[7] In contrast, globally, 53.8 per cent of all humanitarian appeals and strategies included a gender analysis.

77. With support from the international community, the Uganda National Development Plan II envisages the inclusion of refugees in national development planning processes through the Settlement Transformative Agenda of the Government, which is also supported by the United Nations Development Assistance Framework.

78. Collaboration was deepened with the International Finance Corporation, building on its study entitled "Kakuma as a marketplace", which provides the private sector with data that will allow for informed decision-making on the provision of goods, services and employment in refugee-hosting areas. The Corporation will conduct similar studies in other African countries hosting refugees.

79. In the spirit of longer-term approaches to sustainable development, UNDP implemented a number of projects in several comprehensive refugee response framework rollout countries. In Zambia, UNDP and the Government are working on a programme to support the local integration of former Angolan and Rwandan refugees. The programme allows the former refugees, who receive permanent residency in Zambia, to gain access to land and engage in income-earning opportunities, alongside the host communities. A community project in Ethiopia, implemented by the Government, UNHCR, UNDP, UNICEF, UN-Women and the United Nations police, supports social cohesion and policing in areas with many refugees.

80. The Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development of the European Commission has contributed to the regional approach to the refugee situation in Somalia. The Japan International Cooperation Agency increased its support for refugees and host communities through an area-based approach in northern Uganda. Support was also received from development ministries and agencies of Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The expanded involvement of development actors in a manner that is complementary to humanitarian efforts has been a key focus in the development of the global compact on refugees.

D. Partnerships with regional organizations

81. Regional organizations played a crucial role in addressing challenges and promoting solutions for displaced populations in Africa. IGAD was instrumental in supporting the development of the regional cooperation framework for the Somali refugee situation. In December 2017, IGAD, together with the Government of Djibouti, hosted the first regional meeting of education ministers.

82. The African Union remains a central partner in addressing the situation of refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa. In November 2017, the African Union held its fifth humanitarian symposium in Nairobi to build a common vision for protection, solidarity and solutions for protracted situations and large-scale refugee movements in Africa and share lessons learned from the application of the comprehensive refugee response framework. The African Development Bank invested in a number of fragile States, supporting education, strengthening institutions and improving food security and agricultural development. In addition, the Southern African Development Community developed its draft regional policy framework on the management of asylum seekers and refugees, aligning it with the comprehensive refugee response framework. Partnerships with the Economic Community of West African States also remained strong, leading to numerous advancements in addressing statelessness.

VII. Funding

83. Between July 2017 and the end of May 2018, the Emergency Relief Coordinator allocated $234 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund to support lifesaving activities in 16 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Of that amount, some $196 million enabled aid agencies to provide humanitarian assistance in response to displacement crises in 13 countries. This included allocations from the Fund's rapid-response window ($88 million) and underfunded emergencies window ($108 million). The Fund's allocations during this period included $78 million to assist internally displaced persons in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Congolese refugees who had fled to Burundi, Uganda and Zambia. Some $20 million also went towards providing lifesaving assistance to people displaced from the Central African Republic.

84. Aid agencies in the Democratic Republic of the Congo received the highest amount of funding ($66 million) to scale up assistance to people affected by the situation in the east and in the Kasai region, as well as to sustain critical humanitarian activities for other conflict-affected people in the country. This was followed by Uganda ($23 million), the Sudan ($19 million), Chad ($18 million), Cameroon ($10 million), the Central African Republic ($10 million), Ethiopia ($10 million), Nigeria ($10 million) and the United Republic of Tanzania ($10 million). The sectors that received the largest financial support were multisectoral refugee assistance ($31 million), food assistance ($30 million) and water, sanitation and hygiene ($23 million).

85. During 2017, the country-based pooled funds operational in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and the Sudan allocated $327 million to support lifesaving humanitarian activities. As at 31 July 2018, those country-based pooled funds had allocated $156 million in that regard.

86. Underfunding constrained humanitarian action on several fronts. The UNHCR 2017 budget for Africa of $2,925.2 million, which included supplementary budgets for unforeseen emergencies, was only 49 per cent funded. This led to a reduction in services, such as health care and education, and affected protection monitoring and livelihood assistance. Notwithstanding efforts to mobilize funds for the various regional refugee response plans, funding remained insufficient for the Burundi (21 per cent) and South Sudan (34 per cent) regional refugee response plans. Several humanitarian response plans were also seriously underfunded: the Burundi situation received 19.3 per cent of the requirements ($141.8 million) and the Central African Republic situation only 22.5 per cent ($515.6 million).

VIII. Conclusions and recommendations

87. The growing level of forced displacement in Africa and continued conflict, which is preventing millions of people from returning to their homes, are deeply concerning trends. At the same time, the commitments reflected in the New York Declaration and the comprehensive refugee response framework are forging new initiatives to strengthen protection and solutions and to ease the burden on host communities.

88. Stronger synergies, coordination and partnerships, embedded in a whole-of-society approach, are contributing to a more effective and coherent response to displacement. The leadership of host countries in the pursuit of comprehensive approaches is to be commended and warrants increased support from the international community. The strengthened engagement of development actors and international

and regional financial institutions is giving refugees, returnees and host communities a chance at a better life. Progressive and inclusive policies and laws enacted by States, which support freedom of movement, the right to work and greater socioeconomic inclusion, are strengthening resilience and livelihoods.

89. **Significant progress has been made in the development of the global compact on refugees, which will support, strengthen and further anchor these trends through the cooperative efforts of the international community. Indeed, international cooperation to address the key challenges of humanitarian assistance has been at the core of the discussions leading to the global compact. With that in mind:**

(a) **All States are urged to support actively the adoption and implementation of the global compact on refugees, which is aimed at improving international responses to large-scale refugee situations by easing pressure on host States, enhancing refugee self-reliance, expanding access to third-country solutions and supporting conditions in countries of origin that enable refugees to return in safety and dignity;**

(b) **All States are urged to address the root causes of displacement and to foster peace, stability and prosperity in Africa, with the paramount objective of preventing conflict and alleviating human suffering;**

(c) **All parties are called upon to ensure respect for international humanitarian law and human rights law, including by protecting civilians during armed conflict and preventing serious human rights violations — in particular sexual and gender-based violence;**

(d) **Recalling that the principle of non-refoulement, enshrined in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, is considered to be a rule of customary international law, States are reminded of their obligation to respect the right to seek asylum and to keep their borders open to those fleeing conflict and persecution. Similarly, States are urged to ensure that the repatriation movements of refugees are safe, dignified and voluntary;**

(e) **All States and non-State actors are called upon to facilitate rapid and unimpeded access to refugees, internally displaced persons and other victims of conflict; to take all appropriate steps to protect humanitarian personnel; and to ensure the civilian and humanitarian character of asylum;**

(f) **African States that have not yet done so are encouraged to consider acceding to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, and to work towards the goal of eradicating statelessness by 2024;**

(g) **Recognizing the importance of the principle of international solidarity and burden- and responsibility-sharing, States — in cooperation with relevant stakeholders — are encouraged to implement the commitments made in the New York Declaration and the leaders' summit on refugees, and to provide their full support for the application of the comprehensive refugee response framework in Africa;**

(h) **States are encouraged to support good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law, and to promote inclusion and sustainable development, in line with Agenda 2063 of the African Union and the Sustainable Development Goals, including by engaging in new partnerships with development actors;**

(i) **In anticipation of the tenth anniversary of the Kampala Convention, African States that have not yet signed or ratified that legal instrument are**

encouraged to do so, and those that have ratified the instrument are urged to fully incorporate it into domestic law to allow for its effective implementation at the national level. Furthermore, parties are called upon to reduce the vulnerability, impoverishment and marginalization of internally displaced persons by considering options for local integration or settlement in another part of the country, should return not be possible;

(j) All parties are encouraged to prioritize education and livelihoods in any humanitarian response in order to prevent generations of refugees and internally displaced persons from living in poverty and to enable them to contribute to the development of their countries in the future;

(k) All parties are called upon to strengthen accountability towards the displaced, including by mitigating the risk of fraud, misconduct and exploitation;

(l) Donors are urged to ensure the availability of adequate, flexible and predictable funding to help address the unprecedented needs of refugees and internally displaced persons in Africa and to ensure multi-year, flexible funding that transcends the humanitarian-development divide.